

law requirements for other health insurance plans and even well beyond the reforms contained in the underlying legislation.

The Health Insurance Reform Act will pass, Mr. President, only if we keep our eye on the ball.

First, we need to recognize that success always requires compromise. The House has conceded on malpractice reforms, has conceded on MEWA's and now receded significantly on the MSA's.

Second, we need to bear in mind that the legislation will help 25 million Americans each year, and that the positive impact of the bill's core reforms will far outweigh any potential harm from the limited medical savings account proposal that has been offered by Republicans last night.

I believe we have worked too long and too hard in a bipartisan fashion to let this historic opportunity to pass meaningful health reform pass us by. I hope we can come together in the next few days. I think it is absolutely essential that we not let time slip away. And I hope that the White House and the Democratic leadership will genuinely help us reach that goal.

I yield the floor.

Mr. DOMENICI addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Mexico.

Mr. DOMENICI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I be permitted to speak for 6 minutes as if in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

FEDERAL DROUGHT ASSISTANCE IN THE SOUTHWEST

Mr. DOMENICI. Mr. President, I wish to bring a very serious matter to the attention of my colleagues.

As has been reported by several Senators, there is a serious drought underway in the Southwest, and I believe my State of New Mexico is probably the most seriously affected because it is suffering a very severe drought, almost in its entirety.

As my colleague from New Mexico, Senator BINGAMAN, has stated on at least two occasions on the Senate floor in the last month, livestock producers are among the most devastated by these drought conditions. Today, I would like to inform the Senate of the current status of one of the relief options that several of us have been pursuing: the Emergency Feed Grain Reserve.

It involves a small portion of grain reserves held by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, known as the Emergency Feed Grain Reserve. Under this program, the Secretary of Agriculture is authorized to purchase and store up to 75 million bushels of grains to be held in reserve for emergency or disaster situations.

Currently, the Department reports that there are about 45 million bushels of grain stored under this program. In

the event of an emergency, the Secretary of Agriculture has a great deal of flexibility in how these reserve grains are to be used.

On June 5, the Senate passed a concurrent resolution, Senate Concurrent Resolution 63, which called on the Secretary of Agriculture to release all grains held in the emergency reserve to provide relief for livestock producers whose livelihoods are threatened by this natural disaster. In fact, the distinguished Senator from Kansas, Mrs. KASSEBAUM, who just spoke, was the lead Senator on that concurrent resolution.

There has been no response.

Again, on June 12, the Senate called on the Secretary to act under the authority of this program by passing two resolutions, Senate Resolution 259 and Senate Resolution 260. These two resolutions called on the Secretary to use the most efficient methods of providing relief under this program, including cash payments generated by receipts from the sale of reserve grains and to give special consideration to those producers who could not receive assistance under any other program.

There was no response.

Let me put the amount of the grain reserve into perspective. As I stated earlier, there are about 45 million bushels of grain in this emergency relief reserve. Reuters news service reported this morning that the average price of corn during the month of June has been slightly more than \$4 a bushel, barley was slightly lower, and wheat was considerably higher, at well over \$5 a bushel.

Even if the Secretary were to sell the emergency reserve stocks at a discount to provide relief in areas of severe grain shortages, there could easily be generated \$100 million to provide relief in those areas where other forms of livestock feed, such as hay, are more needed. This is far greater than the \$18 million that Senator BINGAMAN and I have attempted to provide legislatively through a modest but needed temporary extension of the only relief program for many livestock producers in the Southwest, the Emergency Livestock Feed Program.

Secretary of Agriculture Glickman has a proposal. Earlier this week, I wrote to Secretary Glickman to inquire about the status of various plans or proposals to provide relief for livestock producers in the drought-stricken Southwest.

I also spoke with the Secretary's office by phone and asked what, if anything, else was required for the release of the emergency reserve grains. I was informed that the Agriculture Department had submitted a proposal to the White House some time ago regarding the release of reserve grains for the purpose of this disaster relief but that it had not yet been approved.

I have since been informed that the U.S. Department of Agriculture proposal was sent to the White House on June 4, 1 day before the Senate called

on the Secretary to act. It has been 24 days, Mr. President—it has been 24 days—since Secretary Glickman proposed disaster relief activities to the White House.

There has been no action.

We cannot wait. These ranchers are going broke. When we have an earthquake, we act quickly. This drought is resulting in a gradual elimination of farmers and ranchers who cannot make a living in this drought, which is arguably the worst in 100 years.

When there is a flood, an earthquake, as I indicated, a hurricane, this administration and this Senate prides itself on the responsiveness of its agencies, whether it be FEMA or any other, to the needs of the affected area, and we vote in the Senate for that kind of relief even if it is not our area. We have done that historically, and, God forbid, we stop doing that. It is absolutely our responsibility to help a State with serious problems, and we have that in New Mexico.

The disaster relief that I am addressing today could have begun weeks ago by administrative action, and still there is no response. Farmers and ranchers in my home State of New Mexico and in parts of Arizona, Colorado and Texas, are losing their means of livelihood by having to sell large numbers of their cattle at rock bottom prices to survive. Some have been dealing with these drought conditions for over 3 years, but this year over three-fourths of my State is currently under what is called severe drought, according to the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration. I believe it is time for the President and the White House to approve the plan submitted by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The time is past. It should be done now.

Since there has been no response to my inquiries other than, "We are working on it," I hope that perhaps what I am saying to the Senate here on the floor will bring some action. It is not as if we are asking for billions of dollars, but it ought to be done. I hope the White House will respond quickly.

If there are other things we must do in Congress, I hope they will tell us. I believe the Senate would respond, if we have to change something legislatively to provide assistance to one group of New Mexicans, or another. We may be here in the next few weeks, asking for some extraordinary help. The drought is causing wells to dry up, and water sources to disappear. We are having to move water around in the State to accommodate the various needs. Clearly we may need some extraordinary relief. Today what we are asking for is simple, it is forthright, and it ought to be done.

I thank the Senate for giving me this time and I yield the floor.

Mr. FORD. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the call of the quorum be waived.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 1997

The Senate continued with the consideration of the bill.

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, I regret I cannot vote for this bill. I do congratulate, however, the managers of the bill and the staff of the Armed Services Committee for their meticulous attention to the details of the legislation and for their skillful handling of the bill.

There are many good provisions contained in it, provisions that address legitimate defense needs and provide support for the men and women in our military. Worthy provisions have been added to this bill, such as the amendment offered by Senators NUNN, LUGAR, and others, to provide assistance to Federal and local law enforcement agencies to defend against terrorist use of weapons of mass destruction and to help safeguard or destroy foreign sources of nuclear weapons materials. Another provision establishes a commission to review our national security needs, which will help to shape more realistic future defense budgets. And I am pleased that an amendment I offered was accepted that will provide medical assistance to the children of Gulf war veterans with birth defects and other medical problems while scientific research determines whether their maladies may be a result of their parents' service.

But in the end, this bill remains billions of dollars above the administration's already generous request for the Department of Defense. Other government programs addressing important domestic needs face flat funding or are being reduced, while the defense budget is flush with unrequested funds. Of the amount added to the defense bill, over \$4 billion is designated for procurement programs that are not in the Future Years Defense Plan or on the military services' wish lists. Purchasing weapons that the military has not asked for on this scale is an ill-disguised attempt to provide a defense jobs program. I support a strong, well-equipped military, but buying weapons in 1997 that the military has not planned to purchase until after the year 2000 is not "buying in bulk" to achieve savings. It is welfare for defense contractors. Buying weapons early means turning down the spigot of technological advances, reducing to a trickle the incorporation of improvements, and shutting off the possibility of switching to a new and better design. And what will we do after the turn of the century, when these weapons are built and the shipyards and the aircraft production lines begin to be idle? Buy more weapons before they are needed, to keep the lines open? Where does it all end?

An amendment by Senator EXON, which I cosponsored, would have cut that amount from the bill and direct it toward deficit reduction. It failed. Another amendment, offered by Senator WELLSTONE, would have authorized the transfer of \$1.3 billion of these unrequested funds to education programs, bringing those programs up to the President's requested level. It failed. But \$855 million was added in the defense bill to a multibillion dollar ballistic missile defense program designed in part to protect the United States against the unlikely prospect of a rogue ballistic missile attack. It will not protect us against a terrorist attack using weapons of mass destruction, but only against a very limited number of ballistic missiles. Billions have been, and likely will be, spent to build this "Star Wars Lite" or "Son of Star Wars" while the needs of our people go unmet. I cannot support these kinds of skewed priorities.

Mr. President, is war so glamorous, are weapons of war so beguiling, that we must turn a blind eye to domestic cares? Must our schoolbooks fray and our bridges crumble in order to slake an unquenchable thirst for unnecessary tools of destruction? History will not judge us on our military might alone. It will also cast a critical eye on our wisdom, our learning, and our music and our arts. It will look upon our families, and the way that we treat our children.

Mr. President, Napoleon is remembered for his military exploits, for the battles he fought and the death and destruction that resulted from his actions. But in the end, for all of his personal ambitions, was France any greater as a result of his militaristic acts? What great artists, what great musicians, and what great philosophers were killed in those battles, who might have benefitted all mankind? What monies spent on Napoleon's great armies might otherwise have built spiral, soaring cathedrals, beautiful parks, and stately roads, or fed and educated children? I fear that, like Napoleon, we are in danger of letting our ambitions and priorities become skewed so far in favor of military spending and military might in the pursuit of our role as "the last superpower" that we will be remembered in history only as Napoleon is remembered, for acts of war rather than acts of progress.

Which reminds me of Robert G. Ingersoll's oration at the grave of Napoleon:

A little while ago, I stood by the grave of the old Napoleon—a magnificent tomb of gilt and gold, fit almost for a dead deity—and gazed upon the sarcophagus of rare and nameless marble, where rest at last the ashes of that restless man. I leaned over the balustrade and thought about the career of the greatest soldier of the modern world.

I saw him walking upon the banks of the Seine, contemplating suicide. I saw him at Toulon—I saw him putting down the mob in the streets of Paris—I saw him at the head of the army of Italy—I saw him crossing the bridge of Lodi with the tricolor in his hand—

I saw him in Egypt in the shadows of the pyramids—

I saw him conquer the Alps and mingle the eagles of France with the eagles of the crags. I saw him at Marengo—at Ulm and Austerlitz. I saw him in Russia, where the infantry of the snow and the cavalry of the wild blast scattered his legions like winter's withered leaves. I saw him at Leipsic in defeat and disaster—driven by a million bayonets back upon Paris—clutched like a wild beast—banished to Elba.

I saw him escape and retake an empire by the force of his genius. I saw him upon the frightful field of Waterloo, where Chance and Fate combined to wreck the fortunes of their former king. And I saw him at St. Helena, with his hands clasped behind him, gazing out upon the sad and solemn sea.

And I thought of the orphans and widows he had made—of the tears that had been shed for his glory, and of the only woman who ever loved him, pushed from his heart by the cold hand of ambition.

And I said I would rather have been a French peasant and worn wooden shoes. I would rather have lived in a hut with a vine growing over the door, and the grapes growing purple in the kisses of the autumn sun.

I would rather have been that poor peasant with my loving wife at my side, knitting as the day died out of the sky—with my children upon my knees and their loving arms about me—I would rather have been that man and gone down to the tongueless silence of the dreamless dust, than to have been that imperial impersonation of force and murder, known as "Napoleon the Great!"

So, Mr. President, like Ingersoll in his writing of that beautiful prose, captured my feelings as I watch what has been taking place over the last few years. I support a strong military, prepared and equipped to defend the United States and its genuine security interests abroad. But I am not so bedazzled by a military gilded and draped with a surfeit of unnecessary weapons—with trappings "fit almost for a dead deity"—that I cannot recall other priorities closer to home. I hold my family, and all American families, high on my list of priorities. I hope that in conference we will be able to rethink these spending priorities, to reduce the untimely procurement proposed in this bill, avoid a threatened veto, and produce a bill that balances our legitimate security requirements with our very critical domestic needs.

Mr. BRYAN. Mr. President, I rise today in opposition to the Senate Armed Services Committee's national defense authorization bill for fiscal year 1997. I voted to report the bill out of the Armed Services Committee because I believe it should be openly debated on the Senate floor. I cannot support this bill in its current form as it contains significant and questionable spending increases from the original authorization requested by the Pentagon.

This bill recommends a total spending level for the Pentagon of \$267.3 billion in fiscal year 1997, an extra \$13 billion beyond everything the Pentagon requested for the year. In today's climate of budget cuts, Federal deficits, and balanced budget debate, it is irresponsible to spend an additional \$13 billion on top of the Pentagon's budget